

Title I Pre-K NC Standards and Procedures

Federal Program Monitoring
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

December 2011

Since the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in 1965, preschool services to eligible children have been an allowable use of Title I funds. Providing enriching early childhood experiences can help ensure that children in Title I schools and programs have the foundation to meet academic standards and experience success throughout elementary and secondary school. When preschool is high-quality, it may prevent the need for remediation by addressing children's educational needs early. Section 1112(c)(1)(F) of the ESEA requires LEAs and charters, when developing their plans, to provide an assurance that they will take into account the experience of model programs for the educationally disadvantaged, and the findings of relevant scientifically-based research indicating that services may be most effective in the earliest grades at Title I schools.

Introduction, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Philosophy

North Carolina's Title I Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program is grounded in the National Association for the Education of Young Children's philosophy of developmentally appropriate practices (NAEYC, 2009). Classrooms are child-centered and designed to promote the development of the whole child, including all developmental domains described in Foundations, North Carolina's early learning standards (approaches to learning, emotional and social development, health and physical development, language development and communication, and cognitive development). Learning experiences are meaningful and relevant for every child and reflect his or her developmental, cultural, and individual circumstances.

FUNDING

There are several ways in which Title I funds may be used to fund Pre-K programs. Local education agencies (LEAs) may reserve an amount from the LEA's total allocation to operate a Title I Pre-K program for eligible children in the district as a whole or for a portion of the district. When an LEA chooses to set aside a portion of their Title I allocation to fund a Pre-K program, that program is treated as a targeted assistance program and must meet requirements as such.

In addition, a Title I school may choose to use a portion of their Title I allocation for this purpose. When a school chooses to set aside a portion of its Title I allocation to fund a Pre-K program, requirements are determined according to the status of the school as either a school-wide program or a targeted assistance program.

Title I funds may also be distributed to other comparable public early childhood education programs to operate Title I Pre-K programs. Head Start, Even Start, and Early Reading First are examples of such programs.

Next, Title I funds may be used in conjunction with funds from other public early childhood education programs to operate a Title I Pre-K program. When funds from multiple programs are combined to cover program expenses, it is considered blended funding. The proportion of Title I funding in blended programs or classrooms is determined by the percent of Title I children enrolled in the classroom.

Finally, Title I children may be dually enrolled as Title I/State Funded Pre-K (NC Pre-K) or Title I/Even Start children, as long as the eligibility requirements are met for both programs, with Title I eligibility criteria being considered first. From a funding perspective, this means that two funding sources are utilized to fund a child's slot.

Section 1112(b)(1)(k); Section 1114(c); Section 1115(a), ESEA
D-1; D-2, Non-Regulatory Guidance

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION

Targeted Assistance Programs or Schools

Preschool children served in a targeted assistance school or program, must be at risk of failing to meet North Carolina's academic achievement standards as determined by multiple, educationally related, objective criteria. Eligibility must be determined on the basis of multiple, educationally relevant, objective criteria such as teacher judgment, interviews with parents, and developmentally appropriate measures of child development.

Developmentally appropriate measures of child development are those which screen multiple developmental domains. The NC Department of Public Instruction has identified the following instruments as appropriate for use in determining risk:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ & ASQ-3)
- Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS)
- Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Third Edition (DIAL-3) or Fourth Edition (DIAL-4)
- Brigance, including Early Childhood Screen II, Head Start Screen, Preschool Screen II, and K & 1 Screen

Schools are required to select and utilize one of the above screening instruments.

Additional information can be found at: http://www.earlylearning.nc.gov/_pdf/EP-DevelopmentalScreeningJuly2010.pdf.

Note that in order to be reliable measures of children's development, screenings must be conducted in the child's native language.

When gathering information from parents or teachers, standardized measures are important. The Brigance includes subtests that require such input and can be completed as part of the developmental assessment. The DIAL includes these components and can be completed at the same time as the developmental assessment. Both the ASQ and PEDS are completed by parents and have been shown to be more valid than instruments completed by other professionals. Both of these instruments fulfill the requirements for a developmentally appropriate measure as well as parent input.

After screening has been conducted to determine risk, results must be documented in writing to verify eligibility. Programs may create an eligibility form for this purpose. A point system that consolidates the results of the screening components may be used as well.

Rank Ordering

Targeted assistance programs are required to document that children with the greatest need are served first. Therefore, screening results are used to rank-order applicants from those showing the greatest needs to those showing the least. The rank ordered list is developed based on children from the entire district and focuses on educational need. (Please note: The rank ordered list should not be based on residential school for kindergarten.) Program participants are then selected from that list in the order they are ranked.

Risk factors may not be considered in the selection process as eligibility criteria. While risk factors (e.g. mother's level of education, father is incarcerated, etc.) may indicate the potential for concern, few provide information that specifically describes the developmental status of the child.

Income

Family income information may be gathered and used to prioritize. For example, after the selection process has been completed and a rank-ordered list has been compiled, income could be used to further rank two children tied for rank-ordering. The use of income to prioritize may be especially helpful when there are not sufficient resources to serve all preschool children. Children should not be identified solely on the basis of family income.

Section 1115(b), ESEA

D-6, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Schoolwide Pre-K Programs

In a Title I school operating a schoolwide program, all preschool children in the school's attendance area are eligible for services. The school does not have to identify particular children as eligible to participate. However, if the school is unable to serve all preschool children who apply, a process for determining which children are served is necessary and should be documented. Schools typically use a selection process similar to that used by targeted assistance schools.

Section 1114, ESEA

D-5, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Other Eligibility Considerations

Dual Enrollment

Title I children may be dually enrolled as Title I/State Funded Pre-K (NC Pre-K) or Title I/Even Start children, as long as the eligibility requirements are met for both programs, with Title I eligibility criteria being considered first.

Participation in Other Programs

Children who participated in Head Start, Even Start, Early Reading First, or a Title I Preschool program at any time during the two preceding years, homeless children, and children in institutions for neglected or delinquent children are automatically eligible for Title I preschool. This means the children are eligible for consideration on the same basis as other applicants. This does not mean they are automatically enrolled.

Section 1115(b)(2), ESEA

D-6, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Age

Title I Pre-K can serve children from birth up to the age at which the LEA provides elementary education. Children in North Carolina who are younger than the age of five by August 31; the kindergarten eligibility cut-off date, are eligible to participate in Title I Pre-K. Note: Most schools in North Carolina choose to focus on serving children who are four years old by the eligibility school date. Children who are kindergarten age are not eligible for Title I Pre-K.

Section 1115(b)(1)(A)(ii), ESEA

A-1, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities who meet the entrance requirements must be considered for eligibility, but do not receive preference in the enrollment process. They cannot be denied consideration on the basis of their disability.

Section 1115(b)(2), ESEA

G-4, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Migrant Children

Migrant children who meet the entrance requirements must be considered for eligibility, but do not receive preference in the enrollment process. They cannot be denied consideration on the basis of their migrant status.

Section 1115(b)(2), ESEA

G-5, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Independent Toileting

Children may not be denied enrollment simply because they are not yet using the toilet independently.

Immunizations

Children must meet the legal requirement for immunizations and provide the documentation required for regular school enrollment.

INSTRUCTION

Curriculum

Title I Pre-K programs must use a comprehensive, research based curriculum that is aligned with *Foundations*, North Carolina's early learning standards. The curriculum must support integrated development in all domains of development, including:

- Approaches to Learning
- Emotional and Social Development
- Health and Physical Development
- Language Development and Communication
- Cognitive Development

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has identified curricula that meet these requirements. Title I Pre-K programs are required to use one of the curricula on this approved list:

Infant-Toddler Curricula

The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos, 2nd Edition

High/Scope Infant-Toddler Curriculum

The Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC)

Preschool Curricula

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, 4th Edition or 5th Edition

The Empowered Child, Childtime, 2nd Edition

Explorations with Young Children: A Curriculum Guide from the Bank Street College of Education

High/Scope Preschool Curriculum

Opening the World of Learning (OWL)

Passports: Experiences for Pre-K Success

Tutor Time LifeSmart

Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.earlylearning.nc.gov/pdf/EP-CurriculumAugust2010.pdf>

Along with utilizing a curriculum found on the approved list, programs are required to meet regulations as stated in the Head Start Performance Standards in 45 CFR Section 1304.21 Education and Early Childhood.

<http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/1996-2/042296b.html>

B-5; B-6, Non-Regulatory Guidance

NC Guide for the Early Years.

The North Carolina Guide for the Early Years is an excellent resource and model for local schools to utilize in pursuing high quality. The Guide brings together several resources and gives examples of linking Foundations and the Kindergarten Standard Course of Study Objectives, which can be utilized for planning the curriculum and the learning environment.

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/primaryk3/guide4early-years.pdf>

Achievement Standards

Title I preschool programs in North Carolina should utilize Foundations, which provides “widely held expectations” for preschool children. Furthermore, services must comply at a minimum with the achievement standards established under section 641(a) of the Head Start Act. The specific standards applicable to Title I preschool programs are in regulations at 45 CFR 1304.21-Education and Early Childhood at: <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/other/1996-2/042296b.html>

Section 1112(c)(1)(G), ESEA

Title I preschool programs using the Even Start Family Literacy Program model, or Even Start programs that are expanded through the use of Title I funds, are not required to comply with the Head Start achievement standards. However, Even Start programs are governed by indicators of program quality (performance standards) developed in each State for that program.

Section 1112(c)(3), ESEA

C-4, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Daily Schedule

Instructional days must offer a balance of individual, small group, and large group activities, and allow for sustained creative play. Children must spend one-third of every instructional day engaged in instructional experiences that are embedded in learning centers.

Daily schedules should be designed to establish routines, manage transitions, and allow children to have long uninterrupted time for play both indoors and outdoors. Schedules should be posted for reference by children and adults.

B-1; B-2 Non-Regulatory Guidance

Lesson Plans

Teachers are required to develop lesson plans that include intentional plans. Planning should be comprehensive and include such information as following the interests of the children, appropriate activities, a connection to assessment (individual needs of children), and a connection to Foundations.

B-1, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Assessment

In order to monitor children's progress, Title I Pre-K programs are required to conduct assessments on every child throughout the year. Assessment instruments must be valid, reliable, culturally sensitive, and administered individually by trained personnel. Information gathered through the assessment process should be used to inform instruction and plan learning experiences that address the specific needs of individual children. To support this alignment between assessment and instruction, use of assessment instruments aligned to the curriculum selected for use by the program is ideal.

To support the use of assessment to inform instruction, teachers in Title I Pre-K programs are encouraged to maintain a portfolio for each child. The purpose of the portfolio is to document growth over the course of a school year. Portfolio contents should include, but are not limited to:

- Work samples that document development, including items such as photos of child created products (e.g., block creations, sculptures, dramatizations, child interviews) actual (or copies of) developmental writing samples, artwork, or other items that document child development;

- Anecdotal records, including notes collected during observations of child behaviors that demonstrate particular developmental progress/achievements;
- Inventories for recording specific behaviors and skills, such as Creative Curriculum - Developmental Continuum, High Scope – Preschool Child Observation Record 2nd Edition, Work Sampling System, Learning Accomplishment Profile 3rd Edition, Learning Care System, Galileo Online Assessment System;
- Notes from parent conferences;

Portfolios should be kept current and housed in the classroom, available for review by the child's parent/guardian. At the end of the school year, portfolios for each child should be transferred to the kindergarten classroom that each child is expected to attend.

On-going assessment is the most appropriate means by which a child's progress is documented. Pre and Post screenings are not necessary, nor are they appropriate for showing progress.

For additional information on assessment, please see:

http://www.earlylearning.nc.gov/_pdf/EP-AssessmentAugust2010.pdf.

B-1; B-8; D-11, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Transition

Title I Pre-K programs must have a plan to ensure children have a smooth transition into the Pre-K classroom and from the Pre-K classroom into kindergarten. Examples of strategies that support transition may include, but are not limited to:

- Teacher visits to observe children before the move to a new class
- Home visits designed to learn about the children and their families
- Visits by children to their new classrooms
- Attendance by children for short periods of time in their new classrooms
- Open house before school begins
- Teacher/Parent/Child conferences
- Staggered entry

In addition to ensuring smooth transitions, Title I Pre-K programs can implement strategies to help promote continuity in children's learning. Examples of strategies that promote continuity may include, but are not limited to:

- Coordination of professional development for preschool and kindergarten teachers so that classroom environments and experiences are similar

- Collaborative planning to align prekindergarten and kindergarten curricula and goals
- Classroom visits by kindergarten and preschool teachers to each other's classrooms
- Transfer of children's portfolios from the preschool teacher to the future kindergarten teacher

Section 1112(b)(1)(E)(i), ESEA
B-11, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Staff/Child Ratio and Class Size

A Title I classroom should maintain a maximum staff/child ratio of 1:9. The maximum class size is 18 children, with one teacher and one teacher assistant per classroom. Programs that provide inclusive settings for children with disabilities may require an adult/child ratio smaller than 1 to 9. For LEA administered public school inclusive classrooms, ratios must be in compliance with the NC Policies for Governing Services for Children with Disabilities, Section 1508-2, (Appendix B).

STAFFING

Teachers

Although NCLB's "Highly qualified" does not apply to NC Pre-K teachers, the State Board of Education requires that all teachers teaching in a preschool classroom in North Carolina hold either a Birth-Kindergarten or Pre-K Add-On License.

NC State Board of Education Policy Manual TCP-001-1.00, Licensure Required
E-1, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Teacher Assistants

Title I Pre-K teacher assistants are required to meet NCLB's requirements for paraprofessional requirements. For additional information on Paraprofessionals, see: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/paraguidance.doc>.

E-2, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Professional Development

Teachers are subject to the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) Teacher Licensure Policy and Procedures, which requires teachers to participate in orientation, training, and on-going professional development activities. Professional development for Title I Preschool teachers includes activities that are high quality and impact instruction. Professional development should be on-going, based on scientific research, and aligned with Foundations. Finally,

professional development should include teaching children with special needs and be regularly evaluated for effectiveness.

B-9; E-6, Non-Regulatory Guidance

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Title I Pre-K programs are required to involve families in meaningful ways in the education of their child, with a goal of shared decision-making. The LEA's and school's written parental involvement policies apply to Title I Pre-K families. In fulfilling family involvement requirements, LEA's and schools must provide opportunities for full participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children to the extent feasible and practical. Title I Pre-K staff should ensure communication with families occurs in the native language of the family.

Teachers should work with families to develop a plan for summer or other vacation periods between preschool and kindergarten that allows the child to continue in an instructional program and prevents the loss of previously acquired skills. Families are always encouraged to volunteer at school.

Families are integrally involved in the learning and development of their child(ren). Therefore, the development of a comprehensive plan for family engagement is critical to the success of children during the pre-kindergarten year and in subsequent years as well. In an effort to support family engagement, programs should develop a plan to implement strategies designed to develop partnerships with families and build reciprocal relationships that promote shared decision-making. Meaningful family engagement occurs when early childhood programs and other community organizations and agencies actively reach out to families in meaningful ways, and when families actively support their child(ren)'s learning and development.

Administrators and teachers should provide meaningful opportunities for parents and families that build reciprocal relationships and foster a bond among those involved in the education of the Pre-K child. Relationship-building experiences that promote ongoing, two-way communication and use a variety of methods that reflect the linguistic preferences of the family are encouraged. Following are some examples that are encouraged:

1. Home visits (initial and ongoing), particularly for purposes of learning about the child, his/her family, and family routines;
2. Multiple opportunities for formal and informal conversations where both parents and teachers share their knowledge and expertise, (e.g., phone calls, parent/teacher conferences);
3. Classroom visits and options for parents and families to participate in classroom activities;

4. Parent education (e.g. development of parent centers, one-on-one learning opportunities, skill development classes, and identification and connections to community resources such as “Parents as Teachers”);
5. Family involvement in decision making about their own child and about their child’s early childhood program in general;
6. Opportunities to engage families outside of the regular school day.

Section 1118, ESEA

B-1; B-10; F-2; F-3; F-5; F-6, Non-Regulatory Guidance

For additional information on family involvement, please see:

Non Regulatory Guidance – Parental Involvement Title I, Part A

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/program-monitoring/resources/parentinvolveguidance.pdf>

Parent and Family Involvement Guide – NC Department of Public Instruction

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/program-monitoring/resources/involvement-guide.pdf>

MONITORING

The monitoring of federal programs administered by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction ensures that *all* children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to access a high-quality education. Additionally, monitoring provides oversight of local programs to ensure compliance with federal regulations and to guard against waste, fraud, and abuse. Title I Preschool monitoring is conducted as part of the Title I K-12 monitoring. The following areas are monitored:

- Selection of children
- Instruction
- Fiscal
- Family involvement

The Title I monitoring instrument and checklist can be found at the following website: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/monitoring/> .

Program Quality Reviews (PQR) are available for a LEA and DPI staff to partner and review Pre-K programs utilizing the PQR Instrument for Title I Pre-K. The instrument allows for feedback to occur in the form of, “Commendations” and “Opportunities for Improvement.” The PQR Instrument for Title I Pre-K can be accessed at: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/monitoring/>.

Materials and Equipment

Materials and equipment purchased with Title I funds are to be used solely for children in the targeted assistance program.

Section 1115, ESEA

Title I Allowable Expenses

- Salaries and benefits for teachers and teacher assistants
- Substitute pay
- Professional development (including fees for National Board Certification)
- Developmentally appropriate indoor/outdoor learning materials, supplies, and equipment
- Computer for classroom use
- Nutritious snacks
- Field trips
- Family involvement activities
- Comprehensive services
- Screening to identify children at risk
- Transportation
- Expansion of other early childhood programs such as State-Funded Pre-K, Head Start, Even Start, or Early Reading First

Supplement Versus Supplant

Title I Preschools must supplement and not supplant district responsibilities. Title I funds and services must supplement and not supplant programming. This means that a school may not use Title I funds to perform a service that would normally be paid for with local or state dollars.

Section 1120A, ESEA

Certification Forms

Teachers with full-time assignments in Title I Pre-K classrooms must sign certification forms documenting that 100% of their time is directed to instructional services for Pre-K students. This applies to teachers funded solely with Title I funds, as well as teachers whose salaries are paid from blended funds.

Other Program Considerations

Location

Preschool services may be provided at any location that other Title I services may be provided, including public school buildings, public libraries, community centers, privately owned facilities (including facilities owned by faith-based organizations (FBOs), the child's home and other appropriate settings.

D-3, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Length of School Day/Year

Services in Title I Pre-K should be sufficiently intensive to allow more time for children to benefit from cognitive experiences. Preschools that operate for a full day, on a year-round basis, or have provided children with two years of preschool, show better results than those that offer less intense services.

Therefore, Title I funds should be used to serve children, in full day programs (6-6.5 hours per day) to provide participating children the greatest opportunity for growth and success. These programs should follow the school calendar. The total number of instructional days may be slightly reduced if programs use one of the following practices:

- Staggered entry
- Home visit days
- Professional development days

If the LEA wishes to operate a half-day program or less than a five day week program, justification for such should be included in the grant application for Federal programs.

Any Title I funded transition activity that includes a summertime “readiness” component (that some refer to as “KinderCamp” or “Jump Start”) should be tied to a longer-term strategy that supports parents and children during the entire year before kindergarten. Short term “Kindergarten Readiness” programs for children are not an effective strategy to use when the activity outcome is to fully prepare or “ready” children for the expectations of kindergarten.

B-1, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Transportation

While transportation is not a mandated service, providing transportation ensures access to the Title I Pre-K program. Providing transportation is a local decision.

For information regarding child safety restraint systems in school buses, please see the U.S. Department of Transportation website at:

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/buses/busseatbelt/index.html>

Coordination with Other Programs

Title I Pre-K must coordinate and integrate services with other education services such as Even Start, Head Start, Early Reading first, and other preschool programs. LEA's must also describe, if appropriate, how Title I funds are being used to support preschool programs.

Section 1112(b)(1), ESEA

G-1, Non-Regulatory Guidance

Even Start

A Title I preschool program using an Even Start model must integrate early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program.

Section 1231, ESEA

Additionally, the Title I preschool programs using an Even Start model must include program elements (1) through (15) in section 1235 of Title I, Part B (Even Start Family Literacy Program). The legislation for the Even Start Family Literacy Program is at:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/evenstartformula/legislation.html?exp=0>.

Head Start

Title I funds may be used to complement or extend Head Start programs. All Title I requirements apply to the use of Title I funds. Examples include:

- Services to Title I eligible children who are not eligible for Head Start
- Services to unserved children who are also eligible for Title I
- Additional services to Head Start children who are also eligible for Title I services
- Educational services for children who are eligible for Title I and Head start, with Head Start funds providing other services

G-3, Non-Regulatory Guidance

REFERENCES

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

Title I-Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg1.html>

Serving Preschool Children Under Title I - Non-Regulatory Guidance

March 4, 2004

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/preschoolguidance.pdf>

Head Start Program Performance Standards

1304.21 Education and Early Childhood Development

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/legislation/index.html>

NC Guide for the Early Years, 2nd Edition

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/primaryk3/guide4early-years.pdf>

Foundations (NC's Early Learning Standards)

http://www.earlylearning.nc.gov/Foundations/pdf/BW_condensed.pdf

NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice Position Statement

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSDAP.pdf>

12.2011